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BUSINESS TELEPHONING COURSE IN ENGLISH: SPECIFIC TEACHING PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Today's students know that they must have top-notch career skills to succeed in an increasingly competitive, diverse, and global business environment. Employers and employees alike consistently rank communication skills over the phone at the top of the job requirements list. Thus to prepare students of economic specialties for their future working life in international business we have to include in their language course such skills as speaking and listening on the phone, sending and receiving messages, faxes while dealing with overseas clients, suppliers and potential customers.

A course of Business Telephoning (BT) in English can be distinguished as a unique teaching/learning performance area even though it actually refers to a channel of real-life business communication and may cover practical approaches to survive in an international office environment and to establish a good company image.

Due to specific features of business communication over the phone (the absence of the visual image; using routine phrases, cliché ("*Speaking*", "*Can I help you?*", "*It's a terrible line. Let me call you back*", "*Sorry, I didn't quite catch that*", "*Would you mind repeating it for me, please*"), telephone terminology ('memo messages', 'call screening' 'message indicator', 'remote access', 'digital recording', 'a reference number', 'a message pad', 'unobtainable number', 'a call connect system', 'phone directory' 'unwanted calls', 'subscriber', 'extension', 'cross-talk', 'off the hook'); giving running commentaries (*I'm just looking for a pen so I can write down your mobile number*" "*I'm just thinking that through - it's a good question*", "*I'm just waiting for the file on my computer to open – just a moment, please*", "*Susan is just coming now. She'll be able to answer your question*")) there are specific teaching principles of implementing the given course.

The principles themselves are based on a set of fundamental methodological principles of teaching Business English to students of economics and business [2, p. 64 99], that include motivational sufficiency, practical implementation of communicative competence and the principle of autonomy of students' creative learning activities. The following specific principles are especially useful in case of developing students' professional oriented communicative competence:

Principle 1: teaching BT through simulation of communication.

Simulations as activities which reproduce real-life situations over the phone can be used either in the classroom or for self-study. They often involve role-plays, problem-solving, decision-making tasks and other learning strategies.

Principle 2: teaching BT on the basis of role plays business games.

Such activities represent a sample of possible daily actions and routines that can build language proficiency when speaking and listening over the phone. Both role plays/business games and simulations focus on key strategies for effective telephone communication such as structuring messages, responding positively,

clarifying and giving feedback. They can be done by learners in pairs. In each of the role plays notes are provided for the caller (student A) and the person who answers (student B) as it is shown in the following example:

Student A:

You want to speak to Mrs Braun about your account with her company, W&W. If Mrs Braun isn't in the office, leave the following information:

- *Your name, telephone number: 347-8910 (or use your own).*
- *The reason for your call: changing conditions of your contract with W&W.*
- *You can be reached until 5 o'clock at the above number. If Mrs Braun calls after 5 o'clock, she should call 458-2416.*

Student B:

You are a receptionist at W&W. Student A would like to speak to Mrs Braun, but she is out of the office. Take a message and make sure you get the following information:

- *Name and telephone number - ask student A to spell their surname.*
- *The message student A would like to leave for Mrs Braun.*
- *How late Mrs Braun can call student A at the given telephone number.*

Principle 3: teaching BT with the priority of speaking.

Teaching students how to speak effectively gives the learners the opportunity to put both communication skills and language knowledge into practice. In this way the interest is stimulated and the motivation is increased. Speaking requires special exercises as spontaneous conversation on the given assignments, responding to the remarks and others.

Principle 4: teaching BT as a elicited communication.

Dealing with phone messages, transferring calls, or trying to get to someone through operator/directly means using appropriate telephone language (routine phrases of what to say and what to expect). Thus any telephone conversation can be defined as a clichéd communication that in the context of business calls has an implied element of risk: mistakes and misunderstandings could cost company dearly. The rule of the described principle is obvious: the more clichés will be learned, the quicker appropriate response will be made.

Principle 5: teaching BT in terms of cultural awareness.

Telephone communication across cultures carries its own set of speaking and listening problems. Ignorance about cultural differences can lead to miscommunication and loss of business opportunities. The learners have to understand that simply learning vocabulary is not enough to communicate with the native speakers. It is the culture which is considered to be the means of communication and to be successful in the telephone interaction; great attention should be paid to mastering this knowledge. The defined principle is good in teaching what is acceptable and preferable in English in a particular telephone situation.

Principle 6: teaching BT as a concentration period of study before Business English course.

This principle works best when learners access intermediate level and have basic knowledge and skills in listening and speaking. Due to the given principle professional oriented communicative competence can be formed. Students are more ready to understand in details telephone conversations, react to them appropriately and make telephone calls for specific purpose related to academic or professional area [1, p. 37-38].

The ideas included in the above mentioned principles provide opportunities to develop and apply methodological system of teaching BT course, give guidelines for practical selection of educational materials (materials need to be authentic to reflect real-life telephone conversations), can be applied in development of a specific system of exercises, building special model of teaching.

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